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PREFACE

This book has been compiled for the benefit of all those who are sincerely seeking the TRUTH, the correct way of life and the total recipe for peace in both the worlds.

In it are outlined, very briefly, the merits and beliefs of Islaam, the beauty of which any thinking person would easily perceive. For the person wishing to accept Islaam, some of the myths regarding conversion have been expelled, and the easy, uncomplicated system - as found in every aspect of Islaam - of conversion is explained.

After accepting Islaam in belief, the need for practice arises. This need is best fulfilled by joining a movement which directs towards practicality. Knowledge alone is not of much use unless put into practice.

Islaam cannot be learned from books alone. The Rasul of Allaah (Sallall□hu alayhi wasallam) taught Islaam on a far greater scale by the practical example he set. Indeed, practice illustrates and illuminates Islaam much more than modern-day conferences and mere lip service.

May Allaah guide the readers, both Muslim and Non-Muslim to understand the simplicity and rationality of beautiful Islaam.

MUFTI AFZAL HOOSEN ELIAS

BELIEFS IN ISLAAM

Praise be to Allaah, the Rabb of the worlds, the beneficent, the Merciful.

Basically, the Muslim creed is contained in the following declaration:-

I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allaah.

I bear witness that Muhammad is his Servant and Messenger (Peace be Upon Him).

A Muslim believes that Allaah Ta'aala is one and has no partner. Nothing has a resemblance to Him. Nothing is beyond His ability. No one is worthy of worship but Him. He is Eternal with no beginning, and Everlasting with no end. Nothing exists, but with His will. Comprehension does not encompass Him, and thought cannot understand Him. He is Ever-living and Ever-watching over His creatures.

A Creator with no need ; A Provider with no responsibility ; A Reviver of the dead on the Day of Resurrection. He is Powerful over everything. Everything is in need of Him and everything is easy for Him. There is nothing like Him. He is the All Hearing and Seeing. He created man and predestined their lot and portion and fixed their life span. He knows what they will do before their creation. He orders them to be obedient to Him, and prohibits disobedience. Everything in nature runs according to His power and will. Whatever He wills for his creatures, it will be and whatever He does not, will not be. He guides to the right way whomever He pleases. He is Exalted above opposites or equals. Nothing runs counter to His predestination, His rule or His order.

A Muslim believes that Nabi (Prophet) Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) is His servant and messenger, the seal and last of all Prophets and Messengers. Every claim to Prophethood after him is false. He was sent as a guidance to all mankind.

A Muslim believes that al-Qur'aan is the Word of Allaah revealed to the Nabi (Prophet). It is not created like the speech of man.

A Muslim believes in the physical nature of Jannat (Paradise) and Jahannum

(Hell).

A Muslim believes that Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the last and final Rasul of Allaah.

A Muslim believes that Wahi - Divine Protected Revelation - terminated with the passing away of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).

A Muslim believes that no new Rasul or Nabi is to come after Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) and Isa (Jesus) (Alaihis-Salaam) will come as an Ummati (follower) of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) without losing his previous state of Rasul (Prophethood).

A Muslim believes in the Minor and Major signs preceding the Day of Judgement as predicted by Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).

A Muslim believes in the Major signs, such as the appearance of Mahdi (the saviour and guided one); appearance of Yajooj and Majooj (Gog and Magog); the sinking of the earth and the emergence of smoke; the appearance of Dajjal (anti-Allaah); the rising of the sun from the west; the appearance of a talking beast; the blowing of a cold wind; the rule of non-believers in Africa and the spreading of the fire with all details as explained in authentic Ahadith, i.e. sayings of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).

A Muslim believes in the Aa'raaf (place between Jannah and Jahannum) which will eventually cease to exist.

A Muslim believes that the vision of the believers of Allaah in al-Jannah is true, with no similitude of our vision of things in this world, as He said:

> *"Some faces that day will beam in brightness and beauty looking towards their Rabb" (Q. 75:23-23).*

A Muslim believes in Isra and the Mi'raj (Ascension of Nabi Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), and that the Mi'raj (ascension to the heavens), was in body and soul.

A Muslim believes in al-Hawd or the Blessed Reservoir which removes thirst forever from the blessed ones according to the authentic books of Hadith.

A Muslim believes in the Big Shafa'ah i.e., the intercession of Nabi (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) to Allaah on the Day of Judgement, which will relieve mankind from the torment and anguish of waiting for requital. A Muslim also believes in the smaller Shafa'ah of the Prophet on behalf of some sinners so that they may receive the forgiveness of Allaah.

A Muslim believes in the covenant with Allaah which He drew from the children of Adam, as He has said:

"When your Rabb drew forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves saying: *"Am I your Rabb who cherishes and sustains you?"* They said: *"Yes, we do testify."* This lest you should say on the Day of Judgement: *"Of this we were never mindful"*. (Q.7:172).

This covenant means that Allaah bestowed on mankind certain powers and faculties, whose possession creates special obligations which must be faithfully discharged.

A Muslim believes that Allaah knows from eternity, and in definite quantity, who will enter Jannah (Paradise) and who will suffer the torment of Jahannum (Hell).

A Muslim believes that happy and blessed people are such because of Divine pre-determination and the miserable are such because of Divine pre-determination.

A Muslim believes in al-Lawh, the "Slate", or the eternal record of Allaah concerning everything in the seen and unseen worlds.

A Muslim believes in al-Qalam, the "Pen", which refers to the recording of everything.

A Muslim believes that none can interfere with or change that which is recorded in the al-Lawh.

Thus a Muslim believes that Allaah Ta'aala has foreknown everything and ordained everything in a definite and fixed manner with no alteration, no changing, no opposition, no decrease and no increase. A Muslim also believes that Allaah gave us limited freedom of action to deserve reward or punishment, but this

freedom is still within the confines and will and power of Allaah.

A Muslim believes in al-Arsh, "Throne" and al-Kursi, the "Seat of Power", which cannot be comprehended by our minds; and that Allaah is not in need of "Arsh "or "Kursi"

A Muslim believes in all the miracles of the Ambiyaa (Prophets) and Messengers that are mentioned in the Noble Qur'aan.

A Muslim believes that Allaah Ta'aala referred to Ibrahim (Alaihis-Salaam) as a "friend" and that He talked to Musa (Alaihis-Salaam) in an audible voice.

A Muslim believes in the virgin birth of Isa (Alaihis-Salaam) and in all his miracles that are mentioned in the Qur'aan and that Allaah saved him from crucifixion and raised him to heaven.

A Muslim believes that Allaah revealed the Injil to Isa (Alaihis-Salaam) and the Tawrah to Musa (Alaihis-Salaam) and the Suhuf to Ibrahim (Alaihis-Salaam) and the Zabur to Dawud (Alaihis-Salaam).

A Muslim believes that these Divine Books were the Word of Allaah as is the Qur'aan.

A Muslim believes in the twenty five Prophets and Messengers who are mentioned in the Qur'aan and that Allaah Ta'aala sent many other Messengers and Prophets who are not known to us by name. While we do not make distinction among the prophets and Messengers, we believe that Allaah raised some in rank over others, as stated in the Qur'aan.

A Muslim believes that all people who face Qiblah (north - east direction) in prayer are Muslims, so long as they believe in ALL that which was revealed to Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) and in that which he spoke.

A Muslim does not separate from, or differentiate between the generality of the Muslim community. We see in the Jama'ah (the general community of Islaam), the truth, and consider division in Islaam as misguidance and an evil temptation of the Shaytaan.

A Muslim wishes good and reward for all Muslims, but does not promise or declare by his own judgement that anyone in particular will be granted Paradise or be sent to Hell.

A Muslim seeks forgiveness from Allaah for every Muslim, and does not regard anyone hopeless of receiving mercy from Allaah.

A Muslim believes that the essence of faith is the same in the heart of every Muslim, and the grades or ranks among them differ according to their difference in piety.

A Muslim believes that all believers are protected and guarded by Allaah, and that the best of them are those who are most obedient to Allaah.

A Muslim believes that real faith is the belief in Allaah, His Angles, His Books, His Messengers, the Hereafter, the Resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement, and the predestination by Allaah, whether good or bad, sweet or bitter.

A Muslim believes that Ahl-ul-Kabir, those who commit major sins, among Muslims are not doomed to eternal punishment in Hell, if they died believing in the Oneness of Allaah, even if they did not declare repentance before they met Allaah.

Such sinners are under the judgement of Allaah alone. He may forgive whoever He pleases as stated in His Divine Words: "*Allaah does not forgive that partners should be set up with Him, but He forgives anything else to whom He pleases*". (Q. 4:48).

A Muslim also believes that Allaah, according to His justice, may punish sinners in Hell and then bring them out of it by His Mercy or by the intercession of the pious among His servants and then bring them forth to Paradise.

A Muslim offers prayer for every dead Muslim but He does not judge or declare by His Judgement that a particular one is deserving of Paradise or Hell.

A Muslim does not say to a fellow Muslim that he is a Kaafir (disbeliever) or Munaafiq (hypocrite) so long as his faith is hidden in his heart and he does not commit or declare a grave sin knowingly, but Muslims are left to their hearts, and

submit their condition to their Creator, Who knows the hidden secrets of His servants.

A Muslim does not draw any weapon to threaten the life of any Muslim except in justice according to the Law of Islaam.

A Muslim obeys Muslim leaders so long as they rule and act according to the Law of Allaah and His Messenger.

A Muslim follows the generality of Muslims and does not follow the excesses, nor divisions, nor does he follow any innovations in Islaam. Muslims love the people of justice and faithfulness and dislike the people of injustice and deceit.

A Muslim believes in Resurrection, in the Requital, in Reward and Punishment and in the Mizan, the balance of Requital, in the Hereafter for our deeds in this life.

A Muslim believes that Jannat (Heaven) and the Naar (Hell fire) are already created and are everlasting.

A Muslim believes that Allaah does not put a burden on His servants beyond their ability to bear, because of His Mercy and Kindness, without being under any obligation to do so.

A Muslim believes that supplication and charity given by the living Muslim in the interest of a dead Muslim is beneficial to the dead and hopefully accepted by Allaah.

A Muslim loves all the companions of the Prophet (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) and does not speak of anyone of them except with reverence and respect. Love for them is a sign of good faith and hatred for anyone of them is a mark of hypocrisy.

A Muslim believes that the Khilaafat or succession of the administration of Islaam after the Prophet (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) went to Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (RadhiAllaahu-anhuma) in this order and in justice.
A Muslim believes that the Blessed Ten to whom the prophet was inspired by Allaah to promise Paradise to are also deserving of our testimony as such. They are Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (RadhiAllaahu-anhuma), Addur-Rahmaan bin

Auf, Talh'a bin Ubaidullah, Zubair bin al Awwaam, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Sa'id bin Zaid, `and Abu'Ubaida bin al Jarrah. May Allaah Ta'ala be pleased with them all.

A Muslim believes that all scholars, from the past generation of Islaam (the al-Tabi-een), down to the present generation of scholars and pious learned people of Islaam cannot be mentioned except with praise and appreciation. Whoever mentions one of them with contempt is astray from the right way.

A Muslim believes in the marks and signs of the end of this world which predict the Day of Judgement, whose nearness is mentioned in the Qur'aan and in the authentic Sunnah. Among such signs is the coming of ad-Dajjal or the "Great Imposter", the rise of the sun from the west and ad-Dabbah or the "Beast" which will arise from the earth (Q.27:82).

A Muslim does not consult or believe in an astrologer or soothsayer, and he does believe in the reality of Jadoo (black magic).

A Muslim believes that the Religion with Allaah from the beginning of the world until its end is Islaam as Allaah Ta'aala said:

> *"Surely, the Deen (Religion) with Allaah is Islaam". (Q.3:19).*
> *"If anyone desires a religion other than Islaam never will it be accepted from him". (Q. 3:85).*

We call on Allaah to witness that this is our Faith. We pray, sincerely that He aid us in holding fast to it.

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAAM

Every action done with the awareness that it fulfils the will of Allaah is considered an act of worship in Islaam. Specific acts of worship termed the Pillars of Islaam provide the framework for the spiritual life of a Muslim.

These are given below:-

1. THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

"I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is His servant and messenger." The Prophethood of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) necessitates Muslims to follow his exemplary life in every aspect.

2. PRAYERS

Prayers are prescribed five times a day as a duty towards Allaah. Prayer strengthens and enlivens belief in Allaah and inspires man to spiritually. It purifies the heart and controls temptation, wrong-doing and evil.

3. FASTING

Fasting is prescribed during the month of Ramadaan. This means the abstention from food, beverages and sexual relations from dawn to sunset and the curbing of evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops patience, unselfishness, social conscience and the will power to bear hardship.

4. ZAKAH

Zakah is 2.5% fixed annual contribution collected from wealth and earnings of the well to do and rich. It is spent on the poor and needy in particular and the welfare of the society in general. The payment of Zakah purifies ones income and wealth and helps to establish economic balance and social justice in the society.

5. HAJJ

Hajj or pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in Makkah is prescribed once in a lifetime provided one has the means to undertake the journey.

ISLAAM AND OTHER IDEOLOGIES

Man seeks internal peace and to achieve this form of mental stability he has produced Nazism, Atheism, Nationalism, Communism, Socialism, Imperialism and the like. None of these fulfil the need for mental stability as does Islaam. We

find either total dictatorship or complete freedom. Even where restrictions are placed, they have personal or governmental motivation which more often than not fulfil a selfish need and is not beneficial for all. Islaam when it limits man does so for his own good and for that of society. Sometimes a very strict law is applied, as for theft, adultery and murder which many find difficult to grasp. The reason however is simple. When severity to an individual saves society as a whole then the interests of society has to be protected first. One does not, as seen in the West, sacrifice society for the sake of one individual.

Because of this lopsided reasoning the west is plagued with drugs, high divorce rates, alcoholism and an alarming number of illegitimate children, old age homes, child abuse and diseases, such as the killer AIDS disease.

Islaam is simple, easy to understand, complete, and void of internal or external contradictions. Islaam has a basic belief structure with a just political system, a complete social system and practical economical scheme without any contradictions.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Every person at some stage of his life is faced with questions such as:

What is the meaning and purpose of life?
What is my role in life?
What was I created for?

The materialistic system of education methodically indoctrinates a person to believe that the purpose of life is to amass wealth, to work and seek this fleeting, momentary, temporary world, to become rich, own factories, cars and properties, indulge in merry making, immorality, eating, drinking, dancing and sport. All the above become the end and material the means. In Islaam man is encouraged to acquire enough of the world to live moderately and to keep himself healthy and fit so that he can pray and devote himself to the betterment of himself and the society he lives in and to do so not for worldly fame and glory but only to please his Creator. This is the purpose of man's life here on earth. When we start treating the means as an end itself then only disaster can result. Islaam teaches man to:-

1. Call mankind to accept the oneness of Allaah and the Prophethood (Risalaat) of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam).

2. Worship the one and only Allaah.

3. Please Him by adhering to the way expounded in the Qur'aan and Ahadith.

4. Implement the Shariat (Law).

5. Earn for oneself and mankind, the everlasting Jannat (Paradise).

6. Make every effort to save man from the everlasting Jahannam (Hell).

7. Free mankind from all forms of vice, crime and sin.

While involved in the above, he is allowed to enjoy worldly pleasures within the limits, being careful that they do not become more important then the main issues.

ISLAAM AND RATIONALITY

Islaam maintains a steadfast, simple, logical and rational belief. There is no myth and ideological confusion, for Islaam has no illogical or irrational principles. This promotes security in faith. Rules, regulations, laws, orders and commandments are of Divine origin and thus flawless. Man-made laws change like the style and fashion of the day. No priesthood dominates confessions of sin, for in Islaam man, be he rich or poor, has direct contact with Allaah.

Islaam has scholars of religion and no official Priesthood system.

Islaam promotes laws which are designed not to go against nature, thus, celibacy is not regarded as the norm. The in-born quality of passion should be satisfied legally by the institution of marriage. This creates a harmonious relationship between the needs of the soul and those of the body.

Islaam is A Divine, complete and perfect constitution of life.

ISLAAM AND JUSTICE

Any human being in any part of the world desires safety and security. Man wants his chastity, property, honour, dignity, life and faith protected. Islaam secures this in various ways:-

a. The belief that life is continuous and in the existence of the Hereafter.

b. The belief that one will be rewarded for good behaviour, sacrifice, patience and good actions.

c. The belief in Allaah's infinite mercy which extends to all, male, female, Muslim, Non-Muslim, relatives or strangers, kith or kin, man or animal. Man is bound to err and sin and Islaam leaves the door of sincere repentance and forgiveness open.

ISLAAM AND EQUALITY

All are equal in the eyes of Allaah.

Basic tenets like prayer (Salaat), fasting and pilgrimage (Hajj) display and deepen the concept and feeling of equality. Islaam is for all. Islaam does not suffer from any racial, social and political discrimination.

The rich and the poor, white and black, the beautiful and ugly, the ruler and the ruled, the employer and the employee, the landlord and the tenant, the judge and the judged, the police and the criminal are all questionable in the terms of Islaamic Law. No one is above the Divinely Protected Sacred Law.

ISLAAM AND MORALITY

Islaam fosters all aspects of good character and beautiful patterns of behaviour, balanced mannerism and etiquette sanctioned and approved by the Creator. The

basic rule is: what the sacred law of Islaam has sanctioned as good is good and what it has declared bad is evil. Good manners are rewarded in Jannat (Paradise) while in this life one is blessed with peace, prosperity and psychological security. Volumes have been written on the minute details of good character and etiquette.

Just to mention a few examples, Islaam has forbidden alcohol and other forms of intoxication. The marked decrease in violence from teetotallers is so obvious as to be self explanatory. Other forms of good behaviour are encouraged such as:-

a. Knocking 3 separate times on a person's door before entering. If a reply is received, one may enter. If no reply is given one has to leave. It is not Islaamic etiquette to continue knocking after the third time.

b. Not visiting people during times when intimacy is likely to be enjoyed and most important;

c. Not entering the home of a female in the absence of her husband. This may seem extreme to some but when we look at the causes of adultery which leads to even further social evils such as murder, suicide and divorce, leniency in this regard has borne many evil fruits. The above are but a few of the many down-to-earth, easy to understand and simple laws which protect man and illustrate the high standard of morality which Islaam teaches us to observe and practice.

ISLAAM AND HONESTY

Islaam teaches the Muslim to be honest in speech and work whether in private or in public, even it be against oneself or one's friends or relatives. Islaam promotes truthfulness in speech, sincerity in labour and work and objectivity in procedures. It disapproves of lying, cheating, hypocrisy, favouritism, stealing, forgery and social diseases such as bribery and corruption. The belief that Allaah is All Seeing prevents a believer against the evil temptations of the Devil (Satan). Honesty develops confidence in oneself and of being trusted by others. This creates a socially secure environment. Honesty in behaviour prevents conflicts and contradictions.

Islaam encourages ethical qualities by the direct instructions conveyed to us via Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), through:-

a. rational arguments compatible to reason;

b the promises of reward and boons from Allaah;

c. learning the punishment for misdeeds; and

d. emulation of Nabi, i.e. practice (Amal) which is in essence the law in motion.

ISLAAM AND SIMPLICITY

A Muslim sincerely believes that Allaah is the giver of security, safety, calm, ease, harmony and peace while He alone removes difficulties, problems, chaos, apathy, and all forms of calamities. A Muslim is certain about what is good and bad, true and false, right and wrong, legal and illegal, black and white.

This grants him a definite set of ideals and values with a specific direction. Islaam is not based upon vague general ideas which lend themselves to all sorts of manipulation. The laws about what to do and what not to do are clear cut and simple and not confused and difficult.

ISLAAM AND ECONOMICS

The economical system of Islaam ensures:-

a. that wealth circulates amongst the people;
b. that the rich do not become rich nor the poor poorer;
c. that the poor and needy are cared for;
d. that there is no exploitation or monopolisation;
e. that an equitable standard of living is maintained while providing room for a free open market enterprise system.

f. a simple, non-elaborate and inexpensive method of burial.

ISLAAM AND INHERITANCE

Distribution of the Estate:-

When a person passes away none of his heirs can demand a specific asset, such as the car, shop, or house of the deceased for himself. Every heir has a share in every asset. A process of bartering ones share in lieu of another one can be adopted after such shares are determined.

Upon a persons passing away:-

1. All stock and assets are translated into cash value.
2. His burial expenses, debts, outstanding dowry (Mehr) to his wife are paid immediately.
3. If he has desired that a compulsory pilgrimage be performed on his behalf, then up to one third of his estate is set aside to fulfil his desire.
4. The same rule would apply to the missed fast and prayer. For every missed fast and Salaat an amount equivalent to the Sadaqatul fitr amount of that year has to be given. Witr Salaat is considered to be an individual Salaat. This money is given to the poor.
5. Then and only then, if there is anything left, can the balance of the estate be distributed.

The people who would always inherit:-

a. Children
b. Parents
c. Husbands
e. Wives
f. Even the rights of unborn children have been protected by Islaam. As such the precautionary share of a child would be set aside until the mother gives birth.

ISLAAMIC TEACHINGS AND ADVICES

1. **Moderation:** The best way is the well- balanced middle course. This applies to practically every aspect of one's life: sleeping, eating, walking, talking, charity, dressing and building.

2. **Contentment:** To be satisfied with what you have is itself a boon and favour from Allaah, otherwise life will be a torture and full of unhappiness. A Muslim is content with Allaah as his Rabb (Creator, Owner, Sustainer, and Provider); Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) as his Rasul (Messenger, Guide in every walk of life) and Islaam as his Deen (a complete code of life). Islaam strongly discourages greed, lust for power, pomp and passion. Contentment provides inner satisfaction whereas outward facades only lead to envy and other evils.

3. **Hard Work:** Contentment does not mean that one must become gloomy, dull, lazy, passive or a parasite. Money earned by hard work is lauded while begging is detested. Self-dependence is praised while longing for handouts is not encouraged.

4. **Reliance on Allaah:** Islaam motivates a harmonious balance between striving for livelihood and simultaneously relying on Allaah for enriching ones earnings with his special blessings. In this way obstacles in the path of earning a livelihood will not breed despondence and helplessness. Instead one finds a Companion in distress and turns to Him in all hours of need.

5. **Charity:** Islaam leads to a collective way of life as opposed to selfishness and egoism. A believer is part of the community which he has to aid, support and protect, morally, financially and spiritually. The fortunate are exhorted to help the less fortunate. This creates a mutual feeling of brotherhood and protects the welfare of the locality and society as a whole.

6. **Accountability:** Constant pondering over death and meeting with one's Creator develops a balance between secular desires and heavenly ambitions.

7. **Modesty:** Superiority depends on piety and righteousness and not on colour, race, sex, or tribe. Modesty is declared half of faith. In every action and thought the believer is directed towards modesty. Modesty leads to humility which nourishes good conduct. Modesty uplifts good character and adds beauty to personality and transactions.

8. **Anger:** Islaam teaches control of anger to minimise clashes among individuals of the society.

9. **Mercy and Forgiveness:** Islaam promotes that behaviour should be monitored by the latitude of mercy and forgiveness as opposed to revenge and ruthlessness. This prevents tyranny and exploitation.

10. **Duty:** Islaam urges Muslims to display anger at evil actions which harm society and set what is wrong, right by using the force of hand, power of speech, strength of the pen, and if one is not able to do even this then to deplore and detest the bad and evil one's heart.

11. **Steadfastness as opposed to hypocrisy:** Fulfilling promises is one of the salient characteristics of a Muslim's life. Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) clearly stated: "*The hypocrite shows one of three traits: (can be recognised by one of these 3), if he talks, he lies; if he promises, he breaks it; and if he is trusted, he betrays.*" A Muslim who keeps these as his guidelines, will improve his dealings, transactions, behaviour and character.

12. **Kindness to all:** Islaam wants the Muslim to display kindness to all, even animals. Smiling is a mark of character. Handshaking and embracing is encouraged when meeting to create warmth and friendliness. The rule is that if you cannot do good to anyone then do not harm anyone. Everyone is urged to think, move and plan positively for the betterment of all.

13. **Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) - The example:** Next to the Qur'aan, the total life pattern of Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is recorded, read, studied and easily available to every Muslim. A Muslim emulates this noble conduct in every aspect of life to gain proximity to Allaah. Although every aspect is not compulsory to act upon, it increases ones rewards both materially and spiritually. A Muslim believes with

conviction that these norms are Divinely approved and in following them he earns the pleasure of Allaah. This evades calamities and invokes the mercy of Allaah.

ISLAAM AND SOCIETY

1. **Prayer:** Muslims are urged to pray regularly, collectively and in the Masjid (mosque). This makes the Muslim sociable. Furthermore, the following directives from Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) explain the importance of social harmony.

a. *"Your Iman (faith) is not complete until you desire for others what you desire for yourself."*
b. *"Smiling to your brother is an act of charity."*
c. *"A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim, he does not wrong him nor lets him down."*
d. *"Allaah will help you if you help other brethren."*
e. *"You are not a believer if you harm your neighbour."*

2. **Obedience to Parents:** Parents are so high in the social structure that even if they are non-Muslims, they are to be accorded respect and mercy. They are to be obeyed in every command AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE LAWS OF ALLAAH. The reward for looking after the aged is so great that old age homes are not heard of in an Islaamic society. How ironical that when they are young, active and busy they are surrounded by their families, but no sooner do they reach the age when social company becomes as precious as a breath of air, they are discarded into loneliness. Islaam abhors this treatment of parents and teaches tolerance and patience as the treatment for the irritations of the older members of society, just as they had tolerated the irritations of infancy.

ISLAAM AND THE FAMILY

By protecting each member of the family, Islaam safeguards the family unit. This

in turn makes the society safe, secure and stable.

The child develops emotionally, socially, mentally and physically within the family unit. Divorce is highly disapproved from all the legal acts. Islaam does not approve of the intermingling of sexes and indecent dress which reveals parts of the body and leads to illicit relationships and permissiveness. Islaam classifies the role of the wife as a mother and not a female for commercial enterprise. Islaam liberated the female from slavery, while the commercial world has plunged her into becoming a slave of materialism and for the satisfaction of the whims and fancies of the passionate and lustful. The modern world has turned her into a commercial commodity and still demands her dedication in her role as a mother.

In all western environments the equation is: males + females + alcohol + drugs + dancing + female nudity = illegitimate offspring + divorce + homeless children + AIDS.

The Islaamic equation for a well balanced society is: no intermingling of sexes + no drugs + no alcohol + no female nakedness = stable marriages + legitimate offspring + healthy society. Islaam employs the above measures to generate the true father and true mother without whom the psychological health of a child is in jeopardy.

ISLAAM AND POLYGAMY

Islaam allows the man to have 2, 3 or 4 wives, at the same time provided that he treats them equally and justly. This is not a command but a privilege not likened to raw lust and loose morals. In a monogamous system, adultery and fornication have become a way of life. In the Islaamic system each wife has a right to have her separate home and not to be dominated by the others.

Polygamy is not a problem in Islaam but a solution to the following problems.

1. When the wife is old and ill and cannot satisfy the husband’s physical and sexual needs.
2. When the wife is sterile.
3. When there are so many women that abuse of them by men can result.

In all 3 of the above instances a husband is saved from taking prostitutes and women of loose morals thereby preventing the spread of venereal diseases. The women on the other hand are also protected in that they are legally entitled to be cared for and do not suffer from low self esteem and inferiority which is almost always the result in the case of a mistress or prostitute.

Islaam predicted more than 1400 years ago that there will be more women than men. Science, today, acknowledges that more female children are being born. Thus the imposition of monogamy would mean that a man can have many mistresses who he can use and discard as he pleases. Through polygamy, Islaam has solved this problem and the man can marry another with the corresponding responsibility of looking after her within his means.

ISLAAM AND ALCOHOL

Consumption of alcohol is not permissible in Islaam irrespective of whether it is just a social drink or more. Firstly let us look at the physical disadvantages of alcohol. It causes inflammation of the digestive system, ulcers, loss of appetite, energy loss, mental inefficiency, sexual impotency, convulsions, hallucinations, melancholy, suicide, loss of memory, slurred speech, delusions, blindness, throat and liver disease, dullness, dizziness, anxiety and hangovers. These are only the harms to the body and mind. As a result of these physical damages, there are many social evils created by the physical and verbal abuse which necessarily follow alcoholism. This abuse is inflicted primarily upon the spouse and the children. Once the family unity is disrupted all other evils are born. Many people use the excuse that there's nothing wrong with social drinking. Islaam differs strongly with this view.

Surely one can use many other types of soft drinks without having to resort to liquor which carries the potential hazard of carrying man to the lowest forms of degradation. The nature of this potential is also a matter for concern. Sellers of such drinks will dig up any excuse to make money and therefore the potential for harm is down-played. In an Islaamic environment the child is brought up with such a negative notion of alcohol that he automatically finds other clean methods of soothing his nerves. One has to merely compare adults who drink with those who do not and the results are self explanatory. But unfortunately this obvious fact has

been blurred by those who are making millions in the sale of those drinks and stand much to loose if the people who support them realise the evils of alcohol. Islaam aims to stop this evil at the very root and therefore prohibits not only the consumption of alcohol but also the manufacturing, carrying, buying and selling of it.

ISLAAM AND PORK

The abstention from eating pork is one of the steps Islaam has taken to practice hygiene and to attain purity of human nature. Medical reasons are numerous and after reading them one will realise the wisdom of the Divine law of Islaam.

The pig is lazy, indulgent in sex, dislikes the sun, lacks spirit and determination to fight, lacks self discipline in eating and therefore eats even stool. It is the greatest carrier of germs. Eating pork encourages the revival of old ailments, fosters rheumatism and asthma. It also causes baldness and weakening of the memory.

Further proof of the wisdom behind the prohibition of pork is that it is a host to the following worms which in themselves are carriers of disease:-

1. Trichina worms are found in infected pork which causes Trichinosis infection in the muscles.

2. Balantidnii cote found in the pig's bowels causes dysentery.

3. Faciolipsi Baski found in the pig's small intestines causes persistent diarrhoea.

4. Round worms, i.e. the "travelling worm" causes local infestation, pneumonia, suffocation, jaundice and even brain tumours.

5. Hookworm causes anaemia, diarrhoea and a typhoid-like disease.

6. Paragonimus found in the lung of the pig causes bleeding of the lungs (endemic haemoptysis).

7. Clonorchis senensis found in the bile passage of the pig's liver causes clonobhiasis - a peculiar enlargement of the liver accompanied by severe jaundice, diarrhoea and emaciation.

8. Giganthoryschus gigas found in the pig's intestines causes anaemia and digestive disorders.

9. Mega strongylus apsis found in the pig's lungs causes bronchitis and abscess of the lungs.

10. Swine erysipelas found on the skin of pigs causes fever and inflammation of the skin.

11. Tubercle bacillus causes tuberculosis.

12. Taenia solium (pork tapeworm) found in the eggs of infected pigs causes diarrhoea, digestive disorders, anaemia and infected person remains in a state of chronic invalidism.

13. Trichinalla spirales found in flesh of pig causes trichiasis or tiichinelliasis i.e. acute abdominal pains, diarrhoea, twitching in various muscles, the face becomes puffy, eyelids swell, patient becomes weak and develops asthma and skin rash.

14. Varicella causes smallpox.

15. Sarcoptes scabies found in the flesh of the pigs causes scabies.

16. Fusiformis causes foot-rot.

17. Salmonella suipestifer causes cholera.

EMBRACING ISLAAM

Embracing Islaam is a simple matter. The non-Muslim who is convinced of the truth of Islaam and wishes to enter the fold of Islaam can do so quite simply

without any fanfare and indulgence in ceremonies and rituals which are sometimes imposed on a new convert by ignorant Muslims. In some places a non-Muslim who wishes to enter the fold of Islaam is subjected to ceremonies and rituals which have neither origin nor sanction in Deen. Ignorant 'Imaams" have invented some queer customs which the new Muslim is constrained to carry out. All such practices are NOT Islaamic and no one who enters Islaam should concern himself/herself with the ceremonies of ignorant persons.

Sometimes the convert is made to drink some "special" water, recite unnecessary incantations and observe some other rituals which are pure fabrications and which have absolutely NO relationship with Islaam. Many ignorant persons place greater insistence on circumstances than on the fundamentals of Islaam. The non-Muslim is required by some ignoramuses to first undergo circumcision before he is "accepted" in the fold of Islaam. Circumcision, although an important requirement and teaching of Islaam, is not a fundamental of the Deen. Embracing Islaam should not be pivoted on circumcision. The non-Muslim who wishes to enter Islaam can do so even if he has not yet undergone circumcision.

The non-Muslim who desires to become a Muslim can do so quite simply. He does not have to go through any ordeal. There is no initiation ceremony which Islaam demands of him. Islaam is primarily **BELIEF** adorned by **PRACTICE**. If Islaamic **BELIEF** is accepted in the heart, one is a Muslim. When any person wishes to enter the fold of Islaam and he/she is unable to locate any knowledgeable Muslim to guide him/her in the acceptance of Islaam the only thing to be done is:

1. Reciting the Islaamic declaration of Imaan, viz. Kalimah Tayyaba which is:-

"There is no one worthy of worship but Allaah and Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the Rasool (messenger) of Allaah."

The transliteration of the Kalimah is:

LAA ILAAHA IL LAL LAAHU MUHAMMADUR-RASULULLAH

OR

Instead of Kalimah Tayyibah the following declaration known as Kalimah Shahaadat may be recited:-

"I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship but Allaah and I bear witness that Muhammad (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) is the Rasul (Messenger) of Allaah."

The transliteration of the Kalimah Shahaadat is:

ASH HADU AL LAA ILAAHA IL LAL LA AHU WA ASH HADU ANNA MUHAMMADUR RASULULLAH.

The non-Muslim wishing to enter the fold of Islaam must acknowledge and believe in the truth of this Declaration with his heart and recite it verbally, i.e. with his tongue. Once these requirements have been fulfilled, the reciter will be a Muslim.

Immediately on becoming a Muslim all the laws of Islaam become applicable. It therefore devolves on the Muslim to acquire the knowledge of the basic teachings of Islaam to enable him to perform his Salaat, and conduct his day to day life in accordance with the Shariat (Law).

It is imperative that the new Muslim (in fact all Muslims) make a concerted and sincere effort to improve his knowledge of Islaam so that the quality of his Imaan improves. Without increasing such knowledge the quality of his Imaan will not only remain static but will weaken to a dangerous level.

Similarly, circumcision is not a constituent part of Imaan. Hence, its prior insistence by ignorant people is erroneous. The one who wishes to embrace Islaam should not postpone his acceptance of Islaam until he has undergone circumcision.

PRACTICAL MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF IMAAN AND FOR SAFEGUARDING IMAAN

The quality of Imaan will improve only by means of giving practical expression to the teachings of Islaam. All acts of worship must be rendered correctly and promptly. Refrain from all prohibitions and even from doubtful acts and things.

By doubtful is meant such things which lay between Halaal (permitted) and Haraam (prohibited), i.e. there is a possibility of it being Halaal as well as a possibility of it being Haraam.

The most effective and compulsory way of improving Imaan is to act in accordance with the teachings of Islaam. It is for this reason that Allaah Ta'aala couples Imaan with A'maal-e-Saalihah (Righteous Deeds) in numerous Aayaat (verses) of the Qur'aan Shareef. Righteous deeds create brilliance in Imaan. Minus such deeds, Imaan loses its lustre and becomes dull and dark. This is when Man moves closer to Kufr (disbelief).

In addition to practising righteous deeds, it is highly beneficial for the development of Imaan to engage in Thikrullaah (Remembrance of Allaah). Among the most efficacious forms of Thikr is to recite Laailaaha illAllaah repeatedly and consistently. In this regard Rasulullah (Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) said:-

"Renew (i.e. refresh) your Imaan with Laailaahaa illallaah."

It is also very beneficial for the new Muslim to recite Sura Ikhlaas and Sura Insharaah in abundance. It must be borne in mind that any change, whether it is for one's own betterment or for the betterment of a society involves dedication, sincerity and sacrifice. A person who chooses Islaam as his way of life, and works towards it earns contentment in BOTH the worlds.

May Allaah guide us all to the best of understanding and keep us alive with Imaan and cause us to die with Imaan.
Aameen.

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAAM

Be it known that I, ____,of

____am truly and humbly grateful to Allaah Taala for having guided me to the Straight Path and I hereby openly declare that today I accept on my own free will the Deen of Islaam and I am a Muslim.

PARTICULARS
DATE OF BIRTH____

I. D. NUMBER____

NATIONALITY____

PROFESSION____

SEX____

I HAVE CHOSEN FOR MYSELF THE MUSLIM NAME OF

____

FURTHER DECLARATION
I hereby declare under oath and direct that upon my death, my funeral shall be carried out according to the tents of the Islaamic Faith, and my body shall be buried in a Muslim Cemetery according to the Islaamic Rites.

This done and signed at ________________________________on the ______Day of_______________ Islaamic Date_________________________

Signature of Declarer________________________________
Witness:-
1. ____________________________________
2. ____________________________________

QURAANIC ADVICE

1. Seek help in patience (Sabr) and prayer (Salaat). 2--45
2. Speak beautifully (kindly) to people. 2--83
3. Whatever good you send before for your souls, you shall find it with Allaah. 2--10
4. Allaah is not unaware of what you do. 2--140
5. Compete with one another in good actions. 2--148
6. Remember Me, I will remember you. 2--152
7. Allaah is with those who have patience (Sabr). 2--153
8. We belong to Allaah and to Him we will surely return. 2--156
9. He (satan) is open enemy for you. 2--168
10. Whosoever does a good act it shall be better for him. 2--184
11. Allaah loves not the transgressors. 2--190
12. Mischief mongering is worse than murder (slaughter). 2--191
13. Allaah loves those who do good acts. 2--195
14. Allaah has compassion on (His) bondsmen. 2--207
15. Enter all of you into Islaam in total and follow not the footsteps of satan. 2--208
16. Allah loves those who repent and loves those who are clean. 2--222
17. If you forgive, it is closer to piety. 2--237
18. Forget not to be kind among yourself. 2--237
19. Allaah bestows His Sovereignty on whom He pleases. 2--247
20. When you contract debt for a fixed term record it in writing. 2--283
21. Hide not testimony. 2--284
22. Allaah burdens not a soul beyond its capacity. 2--286
23. But only the men of understanding really heed. 3--7
24. Surely the Deen-religion with Allaah is Islaam-submission to His way. 3--19
25. If they accept Islaam, then truly they are rightly guided. 3--20
26. (Allaah) provides unlimited Rizk-sustenance to whom He pleases. 3--27
27. Obey Allaah and the Rasul-Messenger. 3--48
28. Allaah guides not the oppressive ones. 3--86
29. You will not attain piety unless you spend of that which you cherish. 3--92
30. Hold tightly all of you together and be not divided. 3--103
31. Surely Allaah is aware of what is hidden in your chests. 3--119
32. And in Allaah do the believers place their trust. 3—122

33. When Allaah is your helper none can overcome you. 3--160
34. Allaah is sufficient for us. He is the most excellent trustee. 3--173
35. Every soul shall taste death. 3--185
36. The life of this world is nothing but a small comfort of illusion. 3--185
37. Hasten for forgiveness from your Rabb. 3--133
38. Allaah is sufficient as a helper. 4--45
39. Say to them--all is from Allaah. 4--78
40. Why do they not ponder over the Quraan? 4—82

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SURELY THE DEEN-RELIGION WITH ALLAAH IS ISLAAM-SUBMISSION TO HIS WAY. 3---19

IF THEY ACCEPT ISLAAM, THEN TRULY THEY ARE RIGHTLY GUIDED. 3--20

WHOSO SEEKS AS DEEN-RELIGION OTHER THAN ISLAAM IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FROM HIM. 3--85

ENTER ALL OF YOU INTO THE FOLD OF ISLAAM IN TOTO AND FOLLOW NOT THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SATAN. 2--208

THERE IS NO COMPULSION IN DEEN-RELIGION. 2--256

Hadhrat Abdullaah-bin Masood (RA) stated that some people said to the Rasul-Messenger of Allaah (SAW):-
“O Rasul of Allaah, would we be held responsible for actions committed in the state of ignorance (before embracing Islaam)?”
Upon this he (the Rasul of Allaah (SAW)) said: “He who amongst you performed good actions in Islaam, will NOT be held responsible for them (evil actions which were committed in ignorance before accepting Islaam).” Muslim.